

APPENDIX B RIGHT-OF-WAY CLEARING PLAN

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RIGHT-OF-WAY CLEARING PLAN

RIGHT-OF-WAY CLEARING

The right-of-way (ROW) would be cleared to accommodate the ROW widening process. It is anticipated that ROW clearing would occur in 2013. An approximately ten foot width of trees, primarily on the uphill side of the existing line, would be cleared to widen the ROW to 50 feet along the existing route, and a new 50-foot ROW would be cleared at Cascade Creek and Cave Creek. As described in Chapter 2 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), the ROW may be cleared up to 80 feet in some places to accommodate a different type of transmission structure. As stipulated in the Record of Decision, the Indian Ridge, Sage Brush Point, Swan Creek, Moose Creek, Asbestos, Portal Creek and Jack Smith Bridge staging/decking yards may be utilized during construction.

Clearing of mature vegetation, under or near the conductors, will be required to provide adequate electrical clearance as required by the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) standards and to maintain reliability. NorthWestern Energy (NorthWestern) will coordinate timing and methods of tree clearing and removal with the Gallatin National Forest (GNF), Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), and/or any other agency as appropriate.

The US Forest Service (Forest Service) will approve the ROW boundary for tree removal. In addition, dead, dying, or otherwise dangerous trees or tree limbs located near the ROW that could pose a hazard to the transmission line facilities will be identified, mutually agreed upon and approved by the Forest Service, and then felled on a case-by-case basis.

“Danger trees” are trees or tree limbs (located off of the transmission line ROW, and thus outside of normal clearing limits), which are of such height; condition (e.g., leaning, rotted); location (e.g., side hill, proximity to transmission lines, soil characteristics); and/or species type that they represent a threat to the integrity of the transmission line conductors, pole structures, or other facilities.

After trees are felled, they may be removed from the ROW using ground based equipment or helicopters. Mechanical feller-bunchers would not be used due to the proximity of the existing transmission line to the trees to be removed. With approval from the Forest Service, trees may be left on site and slash appropriately treated.

Figure 1 illustrates potential tree removal methods, ROW access for clearing, and proposed staging and decking areas along the proposed routes. Approximately 15 to 23 acres of ROW would be cleared depending on the alternative chosen. This estimate is based on a combination of field survey and geographical information system (GIS) data including slope analysis, aerial image interpretation and existing access to the ROW.

NorthWestern will manually cut down trees (not shrubs) within the ROW using powered and/or non-powered handheld tools such as chain saws, axes, machetes, and clippers. They may also trim or directionally prune branches from tree trunks. Directional pruning is a practice whereby the trees are pruned to direct growth away from the conductors. NorthWestern uses these highly labor-intensive techniques in special situations where it is desirable to leave trees in place as visual screens (e.g., along roads, streams, and rivers) or where easement contracts and or land/resource plans dictate such trimming criteria. All limb pruning will be flush to the bole.

NorthWestern will avoid tree clearing of old-growth limber pine trees greater than nine inches diameter at breast height (DBH) to the extent possible. Removal and/or trimming of limber pine trees greater than nine inches DBH that pose a fire/fuels risk would be conducted at the minimum required for operation and maintenance activities.

Cut trees shall be whole tree yarded, decked, and removed per Forest Service direction, or left on site as approved by the Forest Service. Non-merchantable trees may be lopped and scattered, piled/burned, decked, or chipped as described below.

The Indian Ridge yard may be the designated helicopter fueling area during construction. A likely scenario would utilize two construction yards/decking areas for processing and receiving logs at the same time during helicopter operations. The helicopter would be utilized to concurrently deliver trees to two yards to keep incoming trees for processing at a manageable pace. Trucks would likely haul processed logs out of processing areas to create adequate room for additional tree processing. Trucking would take place at different decking areas while the helicopter is delivering cleared trees from the ROW to a particular location. If one decking area is full of logs, the helicopter would deliver logs to a different decking location.

SLASH DISPOSAL/FUELS REDUCTION

NorthWestern will dispose of activity fuels to reduce fire hazard and/or improve aesthetic appeal. To the extent feasible, on-site slash left within the ROW would not exceed 10 tons per acre of material over three inches in diameter and five tons per acre for material less than three inches in diameter. Trees removed from the ROW would be whole tree yarded to the extent practicable (such as areas with road access and new alignments along Cascade Creek and Cave Creek). However, due to inaccessibility and safety concerns, it may not be possible to reach desired fuel levels on every piece of ground within the ROW, and trees may be left on site if they cannot be safely removed as approved by the Forest Service and appropriate fuel treatment mutually agreed upon. Depending on access, existing fuel loads, and fire safety, one or more of the following slash disposal methods may be used to reduce activity fuels:

Lopping and Scattering: Vegetation may be lopped and scattered, but may not exceed a depth of 18 inches. Slash may not be left in streambeds, natural drainages, roadside ditches, or collection basins at the entrance of culverts. Slash may not be scattered so that concentrations lie around the base of any live trees.

To the extent practicable, total residual debris (slash and natural debris) greater than three inches in diameter would not exceed 10 tons per acre, and total residual debris less than three inches in diameter allowed would not exceed five tons per acre. This may require dispersing slash over a large area.

Piling/Burning: NorthWestern and the Forest Service will agree on areas to be designated for piling and later burning. All burning shall be coordinated with the Montana-Idaho Airshed Group, and NorthWestern will need to obtain a Gallatin County burn permit if they burn the piles.

Chipping: Foliage and limbs less than six inches in diameter could be chipped and spread on the ground within the ROW or preferably removed from NFS lands. The accumulation on the ground from chipping would not exceed four inches in depth along the ROW.

Decking: In areas that are accessible by existing roads or that allow for overland travel, cut trees may be whole tree yarded, skidded, and decked at designated decking yards or laydown areas for processing and loading onto trucks for transportation off site. During helicopter clearing, whole trees may be yarded from the ROW to the decking yards or laydown areas where they would be limbed and processed. Slash resulting from tree processing at decking areas may be piled and burned or chipped and removed from NFS lands as mutually agreed.

All trees that may be safely removed from the ROW to a decking area shall be removed before May 1 of the following year. Trees would be whole-tree removed as much as possible (meaning the removal of the entire tree, except for the branches that break-off during the cutting and removal operation).

Five log decking areas and two construction yards approximately one tenth to 14 acres have been identified for the temporary storage, collection, handling, sorting, or loading of trees or logs. Logs or trees removed from the ROW would be transported to the decking areas by ground based equipment or helicopter. Helicopter refueling may take place at the Indian Ridge construction yard and potentially at the existing heli-pad located in Big Sky. Figure 1 shows the locations of the proposed decking areas and construction yards. Additional sites on NFS lands must be approved by the Forest Service in advance of use.

SAFETY

The primary concerns relating to ROW clearing and tree removal involve the use of helicopters, traffic management, and recreational use. The main concern to the public with helicopter clearing is the potential for a dropped load. The helicopter pilot must stay to a prescribed route as coordinated with the GNF and MDT. The public would be notified of temporary restrictions/travel delays that affect roads, trails, river access points, and campgrounds. Helicopter operations are subject to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approval. Furthermore, all FAA required flight rules will be in effect and will consist of:

- All helicopter use must be coordinated daily, in advance with Gallatin Dispatch;
- Prior notification to emergency response agencies including state and local police, sheriff, fire department and 911 central office;
- Approval of and coordination with MDT and GNF;
- Flight route(s) with and without external loads and flight timing will be coordinated with MDT and GNF dispatch; and
- Refueling procedures and notification of refueling area including fuel storage with the local fire department.

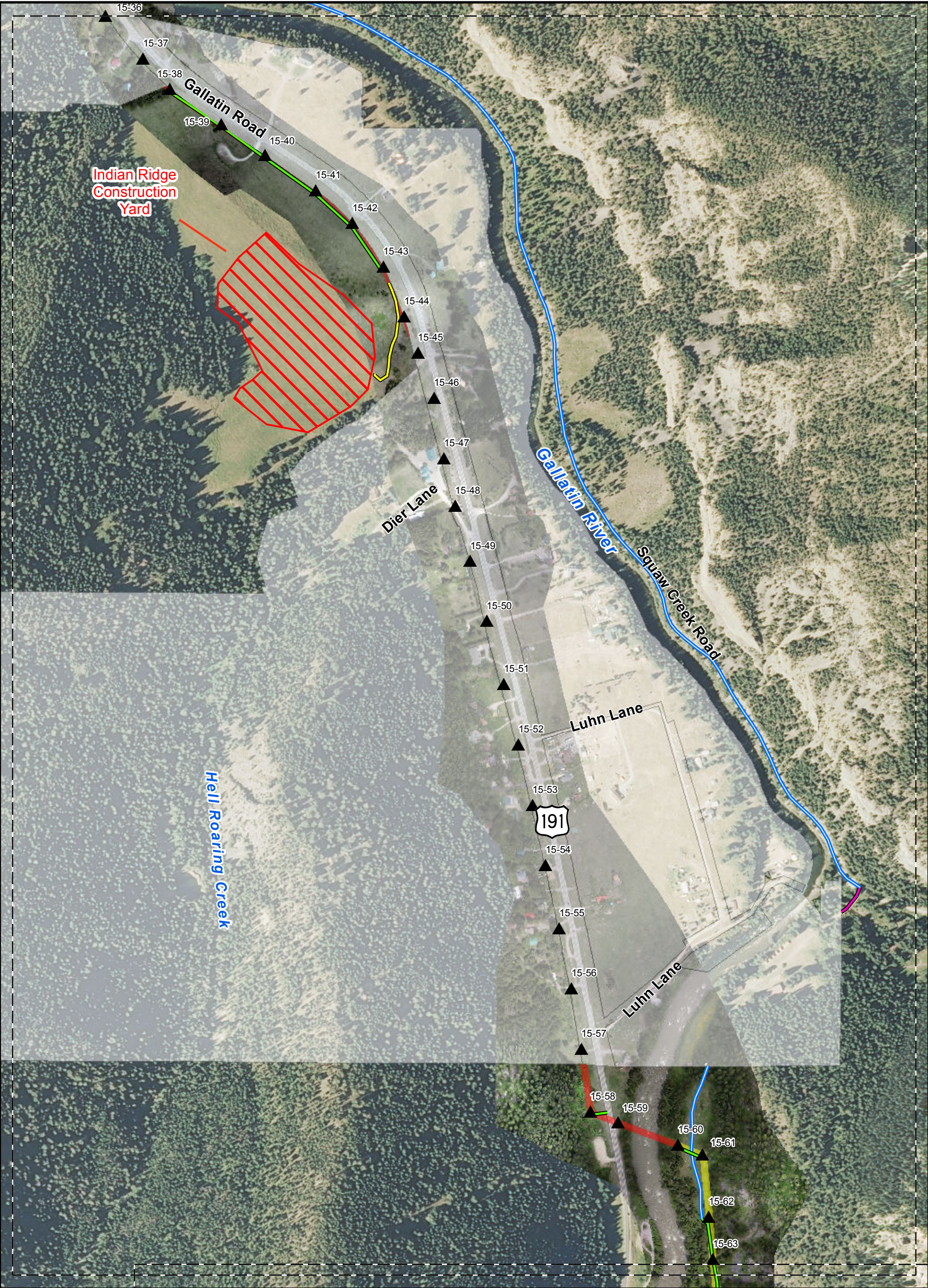
NorthWestern shall coordinate helicopter operations with the MDT and FAA to ensure safe operations, and NorthWestern shall provide a copy of a Transportation Control Plan to the Forest Service prior to operations. If clearing operations occur in the fall, coordination with the GNF and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) would occur to minimize potential impacts to hunters.

RESTORATION

In areas disturbed during ROW clearing, surface preparation (including de-compaction, redistribution of topsoil, etc.), redistribution of coarse woody debris, and reseeding would occur. The method of restoration would normally consist of loosening the soil surface, reseeding, installing cross drains for erosion control and filling ruts and ditches. Restoration would occur as needed during clearing operations and would follow the guidelines of the Weed Management, Reclamation and Revegetation

Plan (Appendix C) that would be included in the Project Construction and Operation Plan (COP) and would require Forest Service coordination and approval.

Erosion and sediment control measures would be specified in the COP and conform to GNF Best Management Practices for Soil and Water Protection, and applicable federal and state regulations. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be prepared for the Project and provided to the GNF prior to construction.



Potential Clearing Method

- Helicopter
- Lop and Scatter
- Mechanical

Project Access Roads

- Use Existing Road
- Improve Existing
- New Temporary Construction
- Overland Travel

Project Features

- Existing Structure
- Substation
- Map Page
- Decking Area or Construction Yard

Jurisdiction

- Private and State Lands
- Forest Service Lands

**JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE**

Fig. 1 - Access Map Book

Map 01 of 14

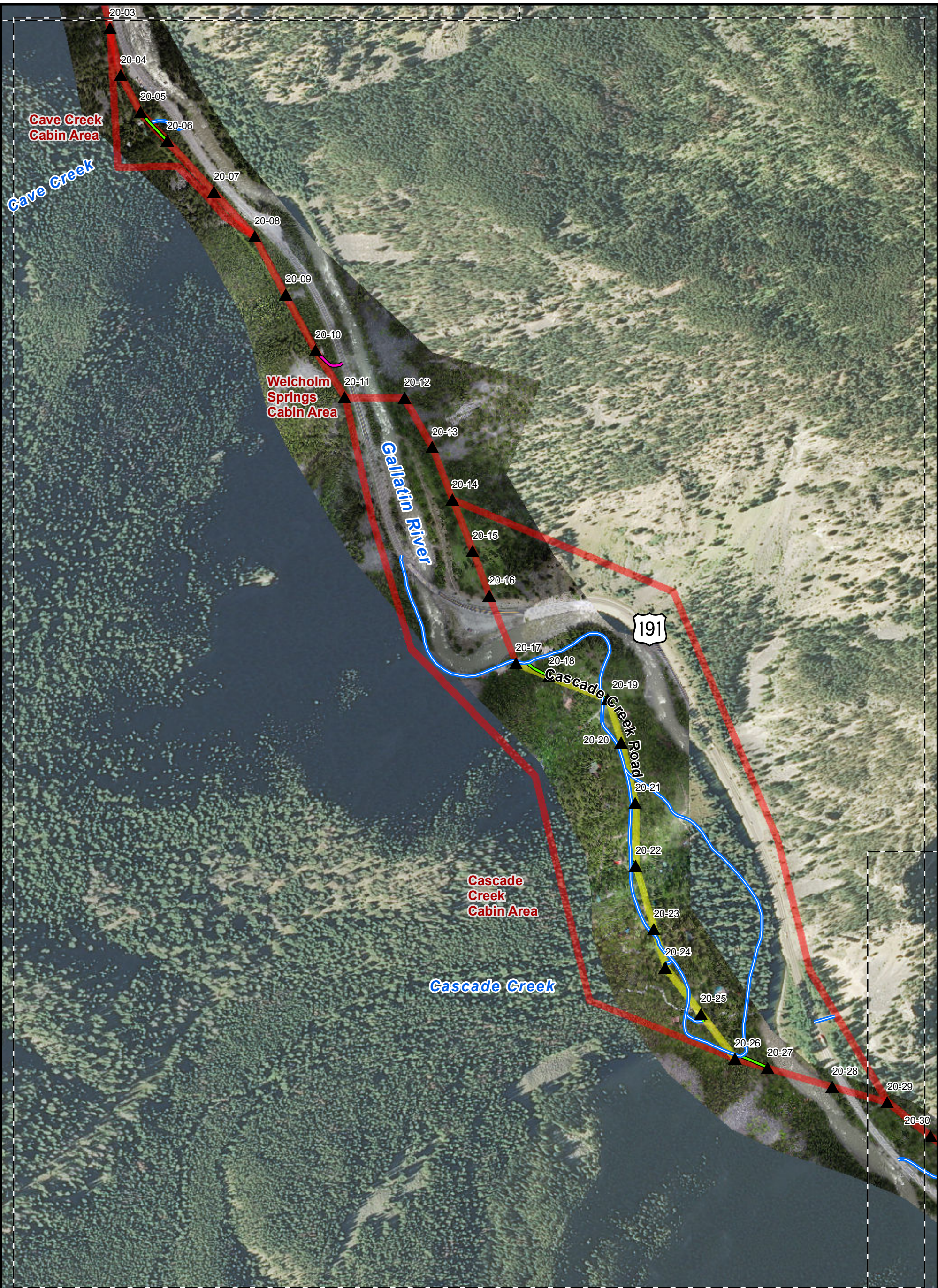
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Potential Clearing Method	Project Features	Jurisdiction
Helicopter	Existing Structure	Private and State Lands
Lop and Scatter	Substation	Forest Service Lands
Mechanical		
Project Access Roads		
Use Existing Road	Map Page	
Improve Existing	Decking Area or Construction Yard	
New Temporary Construction		
Overland Travel		

JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE
Fig. 1 - Access Map Book
Map 02 of 14

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Feet



Potential Clearing Method	Project Features	Jurisdiction
Helicopter	Existing Structure	Private and State Lands
Lop and Scatter	Substation	Forest Service Lands
Mechanical	Map Page	
Project Access Roads	Decking Area or Construction Yard	
Use Existing Road		
Improve Existing		
New Temporary Construction		
Overland Travel		

JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE

Fig. 1 - Access Map Book

Map 03 of 14

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Feet

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Potential Clearing Method

- Helicopter
- Lop and Scatter
- Mechanical

Project Access Roads

- Use Existing Road
- Improve Existing
- New Temporary Construction
- Overland Travel

Project Features

- Existing Structure
- Substation
- Map Page
- Decking Area or Construction Yard

Jurisdiction

- Private and State Lands
- Forest Service Lands

JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE

Fig. 1 - Access Map Book

Map 04 of 14

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Feet



Potential Clearing Method

- Helicopter
- Lop and Scatter
- Mechanical

Project Access Roads

- Use Existing Road
- Improve Existing
- New Temporary Construction
- Overland Travel

Project Features

- Existing Structure
- Substation
- Map Page
- Decking Area or Construction Yard

Jurisdiction

- Private and State Lands
- Forest Service Lands

JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE

Fig. 1 - Access Map Book

Map 05 of 14

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Feet



Potential Clearing Method	Project Features	Jurisdiction
Helicopter	Existing Structure	Private and State Lands
Lop and Scatter	Substation	Forest Service Lands
Mechanical		
Project Access Roads		
Use Existing Road	Map Page	
Improve Existing		
New Temporary Construction	Decking Area or Construction Yard	
Overland Travel		

JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE
Fig. 1 - Access Map Book
Map 06 of 14

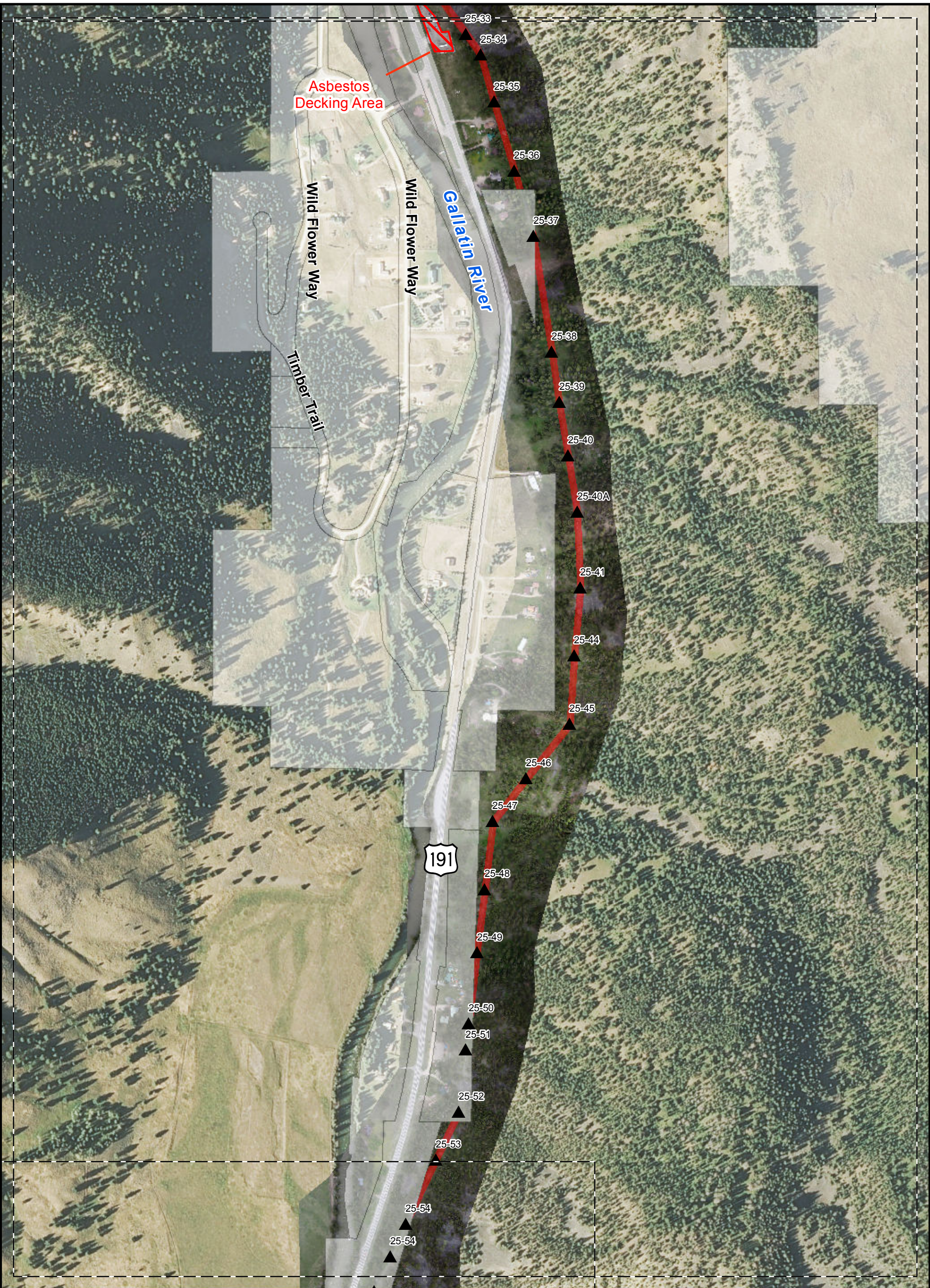
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Potential Clearing Method	Project Features	Jurisdiction
Helicopter	Existing Structure	Private and State Lands
Lop and Scatter	Substation	Forest Service Lands
Mechanical		
Project Access Roads		
Use Existing Road	Map Page	
Improve Existing		
New Temporary Construction		
Overland Travel	Decking Area or Construction Yard	

JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE
Fig. 1 - Access Map Book
Map 07 of 14

0 250 500 1,000
Feet



Potential Clearing Method

- Helicopter
- Lop and Scatter
- Mechanical

Project Access Roads

- Use Existing Road
- Improve Existing
- New Temporary Construction
- Overland Travel

Project Features

- Existing Structure
- Substation
- Map Page
- Decking Area or Construction Yard

Jurisdiction

- Private and State Lands
- Forest Service Lands

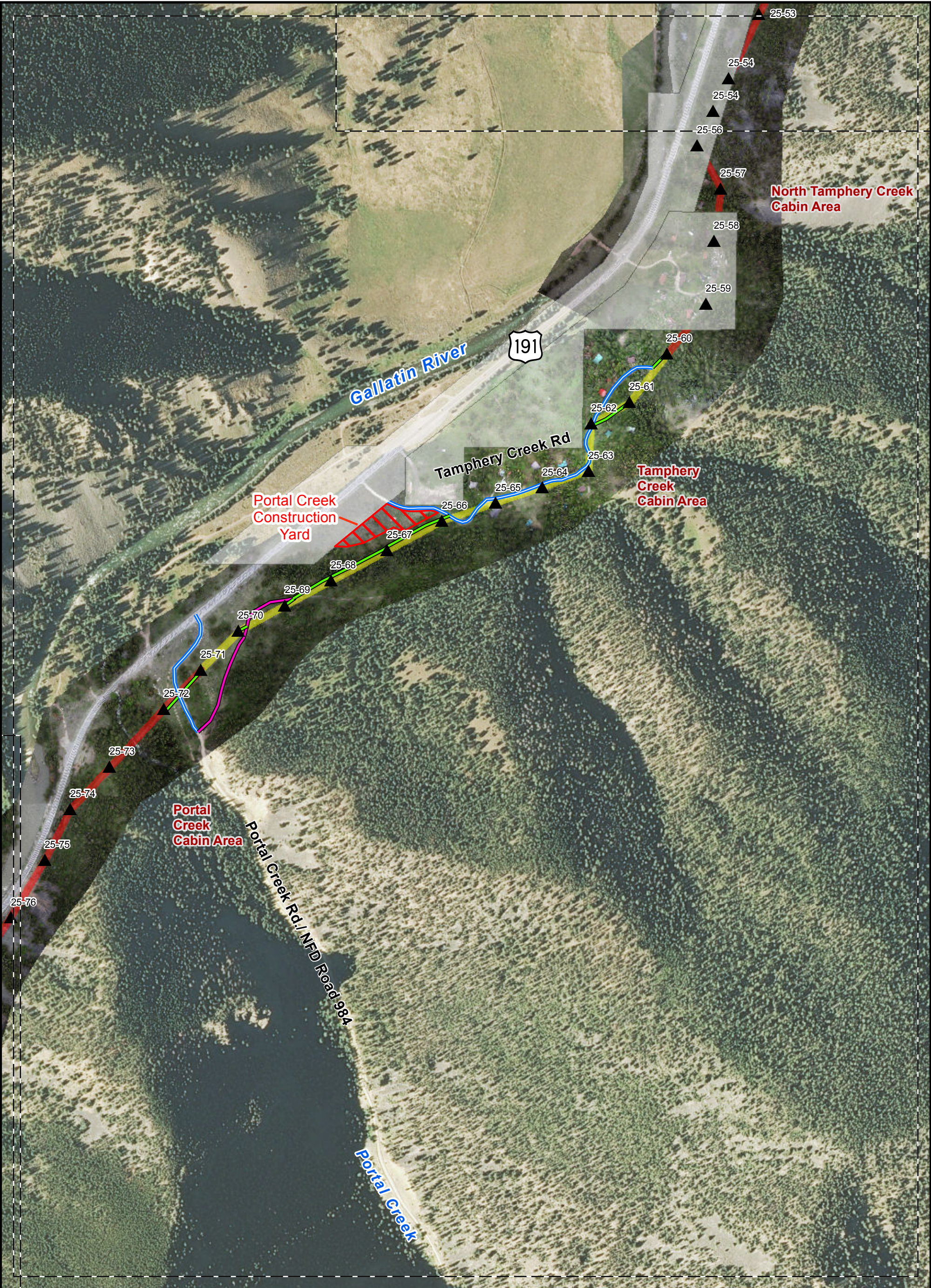
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JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE

Fig. 1 - Access Map Book

Map 08 of 14

0 250 500 1,000
Feet



Potential Clearing Method	Project Features	Jurisdiction
Helicopter	Existing Structure	Private and State Lands
Lop and Scatter	Substation	Forest Service Lands
Mechanical	Map Page	
Use Existing Road	Decking Area or Construction Yard	
Improve Existing		
New Temporary Construction		
Overland Travel		

JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE

Fig. 1 - Access Map Book

Map 09 of 14

0 250 500 1,000
Feet

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Potential Clearing Method

- Helicopter
- Lop and Scatter
- Mechanical

Project Access Roads

- Use Existing Road
- Improve Existing
- New Temporary Construction
- Overland Travel

Project Features

- Existing Structure
- Substation
- Map Page
- Decking Area or Construction Yard

Jurisdiction

- Private and State Lands
- Forest Service Lands

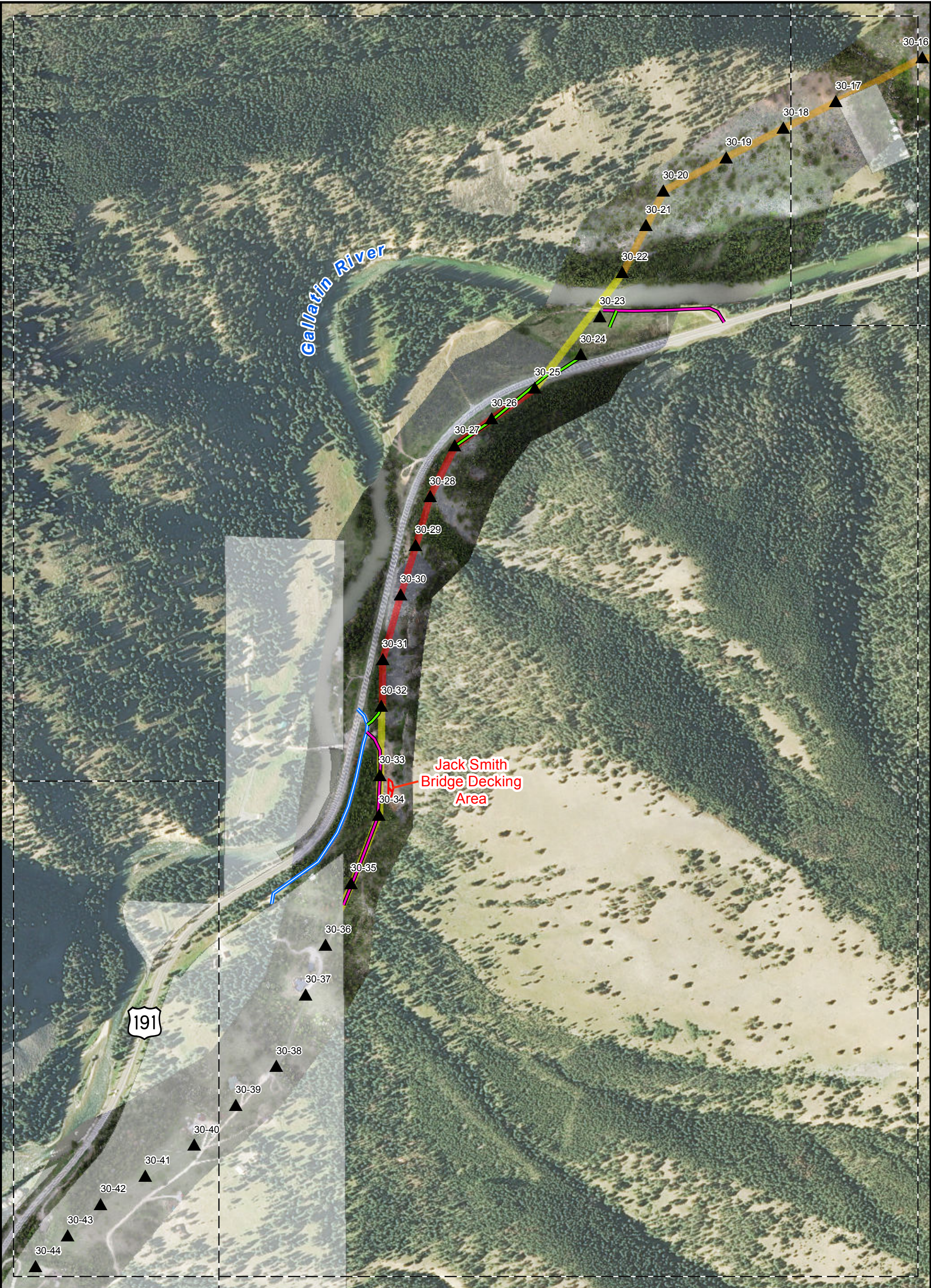
JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE

Fig. 1 - Access Map Book

Map 10 of 14

0 250 500 1,000
Feet

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Potential Clearing Method

- Helicopter
- Lop and Scatter
- Mechanical

Project Access Roads

- Use Existing Road
- Improve Existing
- New Temporary Construction
- Overland Travel

Project Features

- Existing Structure
- Substation
- Map Page
- Decking Area or Construction Yard

Jurisdiction

- Private and State Lands
- Forest Service Lands

**JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE**

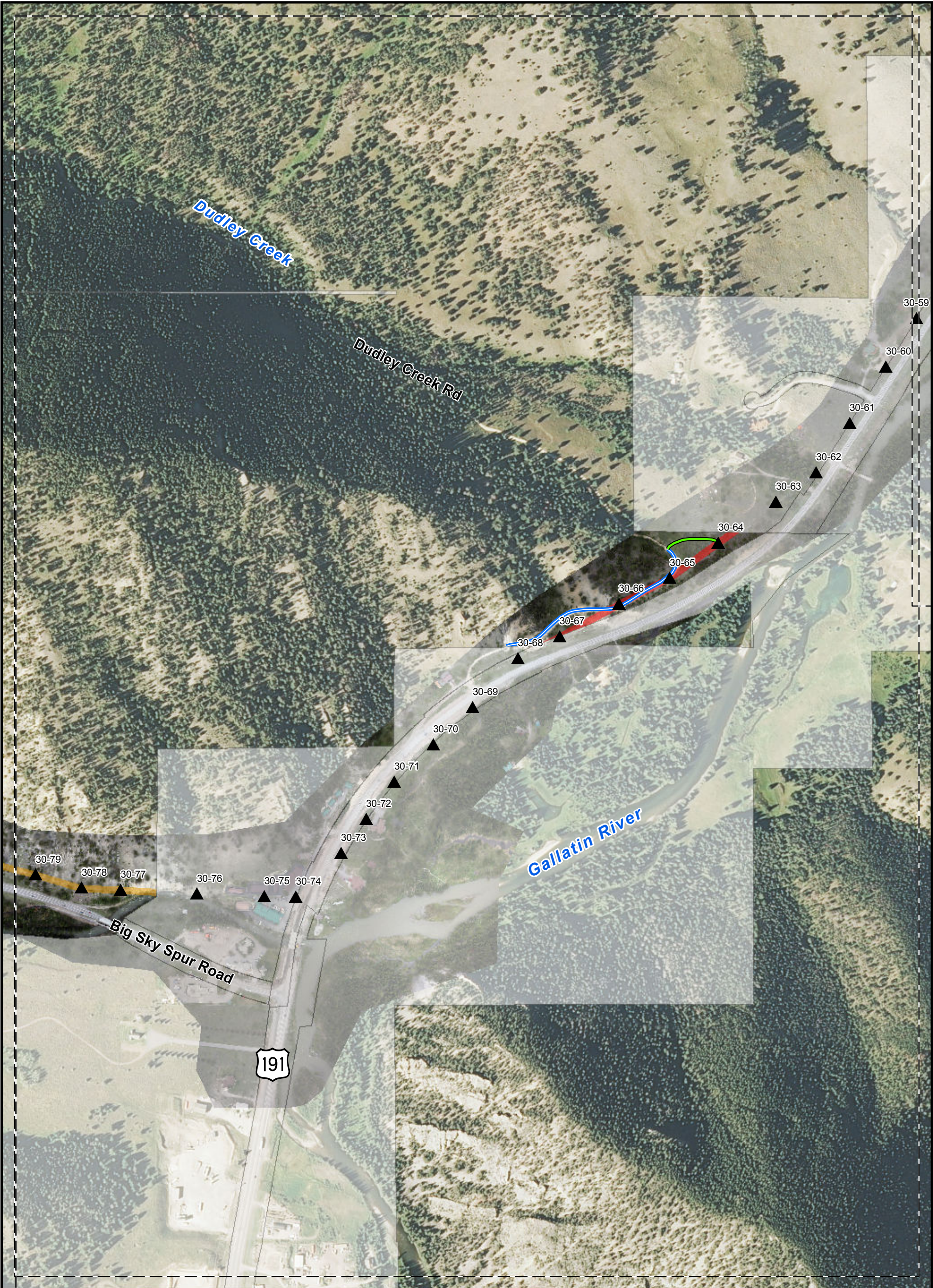
Fig. 1 - Access Map Book

Map 11 of 14

0 250 500 1,000
Feet



<p>Potential Clearing Method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">HelicopterLop and ScatterMechanical <p>Project Access Roads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Use Existing RoadImprove ExistingNew Temporary ConstructionOverland Travel	<p>Project Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Existing StructureSubstationMap PageDecking Area or Construction Yard	<p>Jurisdiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Private and State LandsForest Service Lands		<p>JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY 161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE</p> <p>Fig. 1 - Access Map Book</p> <p>Map 12 of 14</p> <p>0 250 500 1,000 Feet</p>
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Potential Clearing Method	Project Features	Jurisdiction
Helicopter	Existing Structure	Private and State Lands
Lop and Scatter	Substation	Forest Service Lands
Mechanical		
Project Access Roads		
Use Existing Road		
Improve Existing	Map Page	
New Temporary Construction		
Overland Travel	Decking Area or Construction Yard	

JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE

Fig. 1 - Access Map Book

Map 13 of 14

0 250 500 1,000
Feet

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Potential Clearing Method

- Helicopter
- Lop and Scatter
- Mechanical

Project Access Roads

- Use Existing Road
- Improve Existing
- New Temporary Construction
- Overland Travel

Project Features

- Existing Structure
- Substation
- Map Page
- Decking Area or Construction Yard

Jurisdiction

- Private and State Lands
- Forest Service Lands

JACK RABBIT - BIG SKY
161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE

Fig. 1 - Access Map Book

Map 14 of 14

0 250 500 1,000
Feet